IN THE CLAIMS

Cancel claims 15-17, without prejudice as to the filing of a continuation application with claims directed to the same subject matter and amend claims 1, 2, 3, 8, 14 and 15 as follows:

1. (currently amended) A press for flattening dough pieces comprising:

a main frame supportable on a floor of a workplace;

a sub frame supportable by said main frame;

adjustment mechanisms positioned between said sub frame and said main frame to permit leveling and adjustment of said sub frame relative to said main frame;

attachment mechanisms for securing said sub frame to said main frame following adjustment of said sub frame relative to said main frame;

a conveyor belt formed at least partially of a plastic material movably carried on at least one of said frames and presenting an upper horizontal surface along at least a portion of its length;

at least one upper and one lower, vertically opposed, movable platens carried on at least one of said frames;

both of said platens being movable in a longitudinal horizontal direction parallel with a moving direction of said upper horizontal surface of said belt;

said upper one of said platens being movable in a vertical direction toward and away from said conveyor belt;

a linear actuator drivingly connected to said two movable platens;

a first servo motor drivingly connected to said linear actuator;

a carriage to which said two movable platens are mounted;

at least two linear guide rods supporting said carriage for linear movement;

a loading system for loading dough balls onto said moving upper surface of said conveyor belt;

said loading system comprising a transport mechanism arranged to receive dough balls in a sequential stream and to deliver said dough balls to said moving conveyor belt at a speed equal to a speed of said upper surface of said conveyor belt.;

said transport mechanism comprising a drop tube having an upper opening for receiving said sequential stream of dough balls, a pocket wheel positioned below an open bottom end of said drop tube and above said upper surface of said conveyor belt, said pocket wheel having a plurality of depressions in an outer circumference thereof to receive dough balls from said drop tube, and a second servo motor drivingly connected to said pocket wheel; and

a belt splicing hot press carried on at least one of said [[frame]] frames operatively engageable with said belt to splice together severed ends of said belt to form a continuous endless belt.

2. (currently amended) A press according to claim 1, including a control for receiving a signal indicative of a speed of said upper surface of said conveyor belt and for generating a signal to said second servo motor to control a speed of said second servo motor so that said dough balls carried in said depressions of said pocket wheel are delivered to said upper surface of said conveyor belt at a said speed of said upper surface.

3. (currently amended) A press according to claim 1, including belt hold down clamps secured to one of said [[frame]] frames and engageable with said upper surface of said belt.

4. (original) A press according to claim 1, wherein said belt splicing hot press comprises a vertically movable upper platen having a heating element therein and engageable with said upper surface of said belt and a stationary lower platen having a heating element therein and engageable with a lower surface of said belt.

5. (original) A press according to claim 1, including a support frame for said loading system, said support frame being mounted on wheels and being movable relative to said main frame.

6. (original) A press according to claim 1, including an arch style H frame carried on said carriage for supporting said upper platen.

7. (original) A press according to claim 6, wherein said H frame carries a hydraulic cylinder with a vertically movable piston.

8. (currently amended) A press according to claim [[1]] 7, wherein said movable piston includes an adjustable hard stop mechanism for preventing movement of said piston beyond a preselected downward position.

9. (original) A press according to claim 1, including a removable free form die plate secured to a lower face of said upper platen.

10. (original) A press according to claim 9 including a quick release retaining mechanism for securing said die plate to said upper platen.

11. (original) A press for flattening dough pieces comprising:

a main frame supportable on a floor of a workplace;

a sub frame supportable by said main frame;

adjustment mechanisms positioned between said sub frame and said main frame to permit leveling and adjustment of said sub frame relative to said main frame;

attachment mechanisms for securing said sub frame to said main frame following adjustment of said sub frame relative to said main frame;

an endless conveyor belt movably carried on at least said sub frame and presenting an upper horizontal surface along at least a portion of its length;

at least one movable platen carried on at least one of said frames and positioned to compressingly engage said conveyor belt.

12. (original) A press according to claim 11, wherein said at least one movable platen comprises two movable platens and both of said platens being movable in a longitudinal horizontal direction parallel with a moving direction of said upper horizontal surface of said belt and at least one of said platens being movable in a vertical direction.

13. (original) A press according to claim 11, wherein said adjustment mechanisms comprise jack screws extending between said main frame and said sub frame at a plurality of positions.

14. (currently amended) A press according to claim 11, wherein said attachment [[mechanism comprises]] <u>mechanisms comprise</u> a plurality of threaded fasteners.

15-17. (canceled)

18. (currently amended) A press for flattening dough pieces comprising:

a frame supportable on a floor of a workplace;

an endless conveyor belt movably carried on said frame and presenting an upper horizontal surface along at least a portion of its length;

at least one movable platen carried on said frame;

a loading system for loading dough balls onto said moving upper surface of said conveyor belt;

said loading system comprising a transport mechanism arranged to receive dough balls in a sequential stream and to deliver said dough balls to said moving conveyor belt at a speed substantially equal to a speed of said upper surface of said conveyor belt.

19. (original) A press according to claim 18, wherein said transport mechanism comprises a drop tube having an upper opening for receiving said sequential stream of dough balls, a pocket wheel positioned below an open bottom end of said drop tube and above said upper surface of said conveyor belt, said pocket wheel having a plurality of depressions in an outer circumference thereof to receive dough balls from said drop tube, and a servo motor drivingly connected to said pocket wheel.

20. (currently amended) A press according to claim 19, including a control for receiving a signal indicative of [[a]] said speed of said upper surface of said conveyor belt and for generating a signal to said servo motor to control a speed of said motor so that said dough balls carried in said depressions of said pocket wheel are delivered to said upper surface of said conveyor belt at [[a]] said speed of said upper surface.

21. (original) A press according to claim 19, including a dough ball retaining shoe positioned along a circumference of said pocket wheel.

22. (original) A press according to claim 19, including a chute receiver and guide mounted at said upper opening of said drop tube.

23. (original) A press according to claim 19, including a photo eye located in said drop tube for detecting the presence of a dough ball in said drop tube.

24. (original) A press according to claim 18, including a support frame for said loading system, said support frame being mounted on wheels and being movable relative to said frame.

25. (original) A press according to claim 24, including attachment mechanisms for securing said support frame to said frame.

26. (original) A press for flattening dough pieces comprising:

a frame supportable on a floor of a workplace;

a conveyor belt formed at least partially of a plastic material movably carried on said frame and presenting an upper horizontal surface along at least a portion of its length;

at least one movable platen carried on said frame for pressing said dough pieces against said upper surface of said belt;

a belt splicing hot press carried on said frame operatively engageable with said belt to splice together severed ends of said belt to form a continuous endless belt.

27. (original) A press according to claim 26, including belt hold down clamps secured to said frame and engageable with said upper surface of said belt.

28. (original) A press according to claim 26, wherein said belt splicing hot press comprises a vertically movable upper platen having a heating element therein and engageable with said upper surface of said belt and a stationary lower platen having a heating element therein and engageable with a lower surface of said belt.

29. (new) A press according to claim 18, wherein said transport mechanism comprises a series of drop tubes, each having an upper opening for receiving part of said sequential stream of dough balls, a pocket wheel positioned below an open bottom end of said drop tubes and above said upper surface of said conveyor belt, said pocket wheel having a plurality of depressions in an outer circumference thereof to receive dough balls from said drop tubes, and a servo motor drivingly connected to said pocket wheel.

30. (new) A press according to claim 29, including a series of guide tubes positioned between said series of drop tubes and said pocket wheel.